

CHAPTER 2

THE VERBS BE, HAVE, AND DO

• The verb *Be*

Be as a full verb is used in the imperative. We find it in the following combinations:

- a) *Be* + noun (often with an idiomatic meaning): ***Be*** a man! *Don't be* + noun often refers to behaviour:

*Don't **be** silly!*

Be can have the sense of *become* especially in advertisements:

Be the envy of your friends!

Don't be is often used for advice and the agreement is expressed with *I won't*.

Be is also used to mean 'pretend to be', especially after you:

*You **be** mother, and I'll be father.*

- b) *Be* + adjective (only those referring to temporary behaviour, such as *careful/careless; patient/impatient; quiet, silly, rude, rough, snobbish, ungrateful, vain, wasteful*); *be* + noun (in progressive aspect): *a baby, a bore, a brute, a coward, a darling, a fool, a liar, a miser, a show-off, a threat, a worry*.

- c) *Be* + past participle:

Be prepared!

Be seated!

Be warned!

Be in the present simple tense combines with:

- Names (nouns), pronouns to show identification and information: *This **is** Mary. She **is** a doctor.*
- Adjectives: *He **is** angry.*
- Adjectives + nouns: *He **is** an important man.*
- Possessives: *They **are** mine.*
- Adverbs and prepositional phrases: *They **are** at the door.*
- Adverbial particle and *home*: *Tom's home now* ('he's arrived'). Cf. *Tom's at home now*. ('he may have not left at all')

In informal English the present and past of *be* can replace *have/had* with verbs like *do, finish, go*.

Have you finished? *I'm* really finished.

- Empty subject + *be*: *It's* 230 miles from here to Bucharest.
- *Be* + infinitive: *His latest idea **is** to fly in the outer space.*

The progressive forms normally occur only with the present and the past forms of *be*. The progressive is possible with adjectives referring to temporary behaviour but not with adjectives describing states: *hungry, thirsty*. With some combinations there is a strong implication that the behaviour is on purpose.

*Your sister **is being** very tiresome this evening.* (She isn't usually so tiresome.)

*Your sister **was being** a silly girl yesterday.* (She isn't usually a silly girl.)

The forms *have/had been* combine with adjectives describing both temporary behaviour, states and moods continuing up to the present or till then:

- Behaviour: *She's/d **been** very quiet.*
- States: *I've never **been** so anxious.*
- Moods: *He's **been** very gloomy.*
- Weather: *It's **been** very cold lately.*
- Professions: *I've **been** a teacher, but now I'm a politician.*

Have been + to or *in* has the sense of 'visit a place and come back'. *Have gone* always followed by *to* has the sense of 'be at that place' or 'on the way to a place':

*I've **been** in the countryside* (and come back).

*She's **gone** to Paris* (She's on her way or there already). In some exercise books students must pay attention to the meaning of the verb written in brackets: although it is *go*, it can mean *be*.

Wherever Marion ...(find) a job, there was someone who ...(know) that she ...(go) to prison. (Vince1994: 17)

The future of *be* as a full verb combines with many adjectives and nouns for normal *will*-future uses:

*It **will be** rainy tomorrow.*

Will be can be used for deduction:

*That **will be** £ 2.50.*

There + be. The singular form *There's* is often used informally instead of *There are* to refer to the plural:

***There's** many buses to take you to the station.*

There + be combinations are used when we are talking or asking about the existence of people, things and are more idiomatic and natural. They allow important new information to come at the end of the sentence for emphasis:

***There's been** an accident.*

When we have established existence with *there*, we must use personal pronouns + *be* to give more details:

***There's** a Mr. Smith at the door. He wants to speak to the manager.*

There + verbs other than *be* are usually used in the affirmative and formal style. These verbs must be regarded as variations of *be*, as describing a state: *exist, live, lie, remain*.

There lived an old woman with her daughter.

There combines with a few other verbs: *arrive, come, enter, follow, rise* which have restricted uses:

There will follow a short interval between the acts.

Verbs related in meaning to *be*. We can express certainty about states with *be*:

She ***is*** clever, and less certainty with modals:

She ***may be*** clever, or through verbs related to *be*:

She ***seems*** (to be) clever.

Some common verbs related in meaning and function to *be* are: *appear, feel, look, seem, smell, sound, taste; chance, happen* and *prove* can also be used in certain patterns. We cannot normally omit *to be* after *appear* and *seem* except in simple present and simple past:

He ***seems*** (to be) a fool.

To be is usually included before predicative adjectives beginning with *a*:-

The door seems ***to be*** ajar.

We cannot use *to be* after *feel, look, smell, sound* or *taste*:

You ***smell*** nice.

Process verbs (*become, come, fall, go, get, grow, run, turn, wear*) + adjectival complement describe a change of state. They can be used in the progress aspect to emphasise the idea that change is actively in progress:

The milk ***has gone*** sour.

The most common process verbs are *get, become* and *grow*. *Get* is used informally with many adjectives: *get annoyed/bored/depressed/ill/tired/wet*. *Used to* is common after *get* (and less common after *become*) to describe the acquisition of a habit. In such cases, *used to* functions as an adjective and can be replaced by *accustomed to*:

I hated cooking but I ***got used to*** it.

Process verbs are often used in fixed phrases: *come right, come true, fall ill, go mad, run wild, turn nasty, wear thin*:

Don't you think that joke's wearing a bit thin?

Nouns are not common after process verbs but we can use *become* + noun to suggest a change of state or occupation:

He's ***become*** a drug addict.

Make + noun can be used to suggest a change of state:

He **will make** a good doctor.

Come, get and grow can be followed directly by a *to*-infinitive:

We soon **grew** to like the neighbourhood.

☉The verb *Have*.

Have and *have got* meaning 'possess' are interchangeable but there are differences between British and American uses:

1) *have got* is a past form. We can compare:

~ What **have** you **got**? ~ I've **got** everything we need, with

~ **Have** you **got** the money? ~ Yes, I've **got** it. The first example means 'get', the second means 'possess'. The British meaning 'have obtained' is emphasised in the AmE form *have gotten*, which always means 'have obtained'. In spoken, idiomatic BrE¹ *I've got* is more common than *I have*.

2) In BrE the interrogative and negative of *have* as 'possess' can be formed in the same way as for *be*:

Has she a passport? She **hasn't** a passport.

Have without *got* can also form questions and negatives with *do* and *did*. This is common in AmE and is being adopted in BrE:

You **don't have** a car.

Do you **have** trouble with your grammar?

3) *Have* meaning 'possess' is a state verb. It cannot be used in the progressive aspect and is rarely found in the passive or imperative.

4) *Have got* as 'possess' is used mostly for present reference. The affirmative *had got* is sometimes used in the past but *had* alone is preferred:

He **had** a nice collection of stamps.

Had got is never used for certain states:

He **had** (not *had got*) long hair when he was a child. *Had got* is generally used in its original sense of 'had obtained':

When we met he **had** just **got** his driving license.

Will have got is only used in the sense of 'will have obtained':

By the end of next year he **will have got** his driving license. *Have got* is not possible in the passive.

5) We can use *hadn't got* instead of *didn't have*: I **didn't have** (*hadn't got*) any news from him so I rang him up.

6) *Hadn't* alone is possible but not usual. The past interrogative is formed with *did*:

¹ BrE = British English

Did you **have** enough money? *Had* you...? is dated and formal. In *Yes/No* questions we can use *Had you got* but not in *wh*-questions.

7) Some forms of *have* as 'possess' are rarely or at all used:

- the short form of the affirmative, especially in the third person.

*She **has** a new hat* not *She's a new hat*.

- the short form negative is used instead of the contracted:

*I **haven't** a car*.

8) The form *ain't got* is often heard instead of *haven't/ hasn't got*. Similarly, *have* and *has* are often omitted before *got*:

*I **got** everything for the trip*.

We use *have* and *have got* with the meaning of possess:

1. With the meaning of 'own': *He's **got** a new T-shirt*.
2. 'Be able to provide': ***Do** you **have** any paper?*
3. Quantity: *He's **got** four houses*.
4. Physical characteristics: *Our cat **has got** an unusually long tail*.
5. Mental and emotional features: *Tom's mother-in-law **has got** a quick temper*.
6. Family relationships: *I've **got** a brother*.
7. Contacts with other people: *I've **got** a good car mechanic*.
8. 'Wear' (in combination with *on*): *Sheila's **got on** a nice dress*.
9. Illness: *All the boys **have got** smallpox*.
10. Arrangements: (in combination with appointment, conference, date, interview, meeting, time, etc.): *She's **got** a date with Anthony*.
11. Opinions (in combination with nouns like *idea, influence, objection, opinion, point of view, proposal, suggestion*): *He's **got** one of his brilliant ideas again!*
12. 'There is': *You've **got** a wasp on your shoulder*.

Other meanings of have

1. 'Eat, enjoy, experience, drink, take'. When used with these meanings it is a dynamic verb and can be used in the progressive form of all the tenses:

*He's **having** lunch and will not answer the phone*.

!! *Have got* can never replace *have* used as a dynamic verb.

2. With the meaning of *take* it is used like a main verb, using *does* for the interrogative and negative but rarely found in the passive (sometimes in passive infinitive):

*There is nothing **to be had***. (nothing available)

3. *Have* as a full verb is not usually used in its shortened forms in the simple present and past:

*I have (*I've) eggs and bacon for breakfast on Sundays.*

Have + noun in place of other verbs

Some verbs like *sleep*, *ride* can be expressed with *have* + noun meaning 'perform that activity': *sleep* – to *have* a sleep; *dance* – to *have* a dance; *fight* – to *have* a fight; *wash* – to *have* a wash. *Have* replaces verbs like *receive* or *permit*:

*I **had** a note from my secretary in the morning.*

Have in the imperative

Have is used in the imperative quite often. After *do* we use it for emphasis or encouragement:

- Offers: *Do **have** some wine!*
- Suggestions: ***Have** a tea and half an hour's rest!*
- Encouragement: ***Have** a try!*
- Good wishes: ***Have** a good day!*

There are no direct references to appetite, digestion (like *Poftă bună!*) but we can use expressions with *have* to suit particular occasions:

***Have** a good meal/nice party/lovely holiday/pleasant trip!*

☺ The Verb Do

***Do** as a full verb.* It has the meaning of 'perform an activity, be engaged in something'. We can use other verbs to answer questions like:

*~What are you **doing**? ~I'm **writing**.*

When we use *do* in the sense of 'be in the wrong place', it often conveys disapproval:

*What are those tools **doing** in the garden?*

We can use *do* + gerund to refer to named tasks:

*I've **done** the shopping/washing/ironing.*

*I **do** a lot of swimming/reading.*

Compared with *make* that conveys the sense of 'create', *do* often suggests 'be engaged in an activity' and is a more general term. Both of them are used in many fixed combinations.

Combinations with *do*:

1. *A favour, damage, good, no good, (no) harm, an injury, justice, a kindness, a service.*

2. (be engaged in an activity): *business, a deal, one's duty, a job, something for a living, household tasks (cooking);*
- *Do + places: the sights, Rome in a day;*
 - *Do + speed, distance: This car **does** 100 miles an hour;*
 - *Do + subjects: Art, French, an experiment, one's homework, a lesson, research;*
 - *Arrange, clean: the beds, the flowers, the kitchen, one's hair, one's nails, one's teeth.*

Combinations with *make*: *an accusation, an agreement; an apology, an application, an attempt, a bargain, a bed, a phone call, a change, a choice, a claim, a comment, a contribution, a criticism, a decision, a deduction, a demand, a discovery, an effort, an escape, an excuse, a fortune, a guess, a habit of something, history, an impression, an inquiry, a journey, a law, a loss, love, a mess, a mistake, money, a move, a name for oneself, a noise, an offer, a profit, progress, a promise, a proposal, a record, a reference, a remark, a report, a request, room (for), rules, sense (of), a start, a success of, a trip, trouble, use of, war, one's way to a place (=go there), a will.*

Sometimes both *make* and *do* are possible: *make/do the beds.*

Other expressions with *do*:

*How **do** you **do**?*

*That'**ll do** ('it's enough').*

*This **won't do** ('it's unacceptable').*

*I **could do** with a drink ('I'd like').*

*It's **got nothing to do** with me ('it's not my concern').*

***Do** without ('manage without');*

*I **was done** ('cheat') - You **did** me **out of** my share ('cheat me').*

EXERCISES

17. Underline the right verbal forms that fit best the following sentences.

1. I (am/am being) always tired after such long visits paid to relatives.
2. She behaves strangely after she (has gone/has been) to Paris.
3. When we have guests our child always shows off and (is/is being) quite noisy.
4. It (is/will be) windy and wet in two days.
5. Don't answer the phone. That (is/will be) my ex-boyfriend.
6. He (has grown/has come) to enjoy his marriage with Joan.
7. Tom always (got/appeared) depressed when hearing about his former wife.
8. They (ran/went) mad when everything they had planned fell through.

9. My courage began (to wear/to get) thin as the exam drew closer.
10. Her daughter (will turn/will make) a famous actress.

18. Change these sentences into the negative:

1. They had supper at the best restaurant in town after the play. *They didn't have...*
2. Susan has some nice paintings inherited from her parents.
3. I had a wonderful time in Greece last summer.
4. My niece had a game of tennis with one of the best players from the neighbourhood.
5. She has arrived just in time to see the beginning of the show.
6. My parents had their house painted in white last month.
7. We had some coffee before going out.
8. The girls had their swimming lesson with the new instructor.
9. You have finished all your work and now you're ready to go home.
10. I have a hint about the person who did it.

19. Change the following sentences from a general to a specific meaning by the use of the construction with *have*:

1. Please let me look at your new method of knitting. *Please let me have a look...*
2. Would you like to walk on the shore of the lake before going in?
3. I haven't drunk tequila for longer than I can remember.
4. Those two cats have been fighting for the last five minutes.
5. Taste the soup and you'll see how good it is.
6. My family usually rests after lunch.
7. They will probably be swimming in the sea by the time we get there.
8. Children should sleep after such a long walk.
9. The boss wants to talk to you after the meeting.
10. It would be better to lie down if your feet hurt so much.

20. Underline one of the verbs in brackets:

1. When do you (do/make) your shopping?
2. He (did/made) you a favour to tell you the name of the examiner.
3. They (did/made) a journey to the South Pole to study life under freezing conditions.
4. They first (did/made) several experiments and then launched the product on market.
5. Susan (has done/has made) a fortune selling her pictures for *Playboy*.

6. You won't go out until you (have done/have made) your homework.
7. Peter (did/made) an attempt to talk to Jill but everything was in vain, she wouldn't say a word.
8. Ellen (will do/will make) the kitchen and then start cooking.
9. The party of tourists (did/made) all the sights of the city in just one day.
10. They (did/made) a success of their last show.